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quy is it necessary to interpret Macbeth's remark that time had anticipated his dread exploits to mean that he had not yet sent to Macduff. Why could not Shakspere have wished us to infer that time had prevented Macbeth from meting the same fate to Macduff that he had already done to Duncan and Banquo?

Aside from this question, however, through this new method of dividing the time of the play as suggested, the difficulties of the other two analyses would be done away with, and at the same time advantages of both would be retained. In the first place, the action of Act iii, sc. vi, is thrown into its proper perspective if we imagine the scene to have taken place after Act iii, sc. iv, and yet the scene does not become merely an interpolation marring the harmony of Act iii, sc. v, and Act iv, sc. i. In the second place, if we recognize the interval here we find that the action of Act iii, sc. v, and Act iv, sc. i, is centralized, and not only are we able to see the preparations for that crucial visit of Macbeth, but we are also brought face to face with the visit itself and we can watch the most minute development without being obliged, as in the former case, to piece together two scenes by imagining the sequel to the first and the introduction to the second. If the Macbeth were less a drama of action we might conceive that Shakspere had given us merely two disconnected scenes, but when, as here, one event is so closely connected with another, and follows it in quickest succession, it is difficult to believe that he would willingly scatter our attention. And so long as this difficulty of the time does exist, it would seem perhaps that the spirit of the play would be less marred and more easily understood by a mere change in the punctuation of a line in the Folio, than by long explanations of what otherwise seems almost inevitable. Some consideration at least may be given to this suggested interpretation and punctuation of the lines Act iii, iv, 132–133: "I will [that is, send] tomorrow. And betimes I will to the weird sisters."

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THE PRESENT STATUS OF RHETORICAL THEORY.

Two opposing conceptions of the nature of discourse bequeathed to us from classic times still struggle for dominance in our modern rhetorical theory,—the social conception of Plato and the anti-social conception of the Sophists.[1] The latter, though known to us only fragmentarily from allusions and quotations in later treatises, can be, in its essential outlines, easily reconstructed. According to the sophistic teaching, discourse was simply a process of persuading the hearer to a conclusion which the speaker, for any reason, desired him to accept. Analyzed further, this familiar definition discloses certain significant features.

First of all it conveys, though somewhat indirectly, a notion of the ultimate end of the process of discourse. Why should discourse take place at all? Why should the hearer be persuaded? Because, answers the definition, the speaker wishes to persuade him. And, to pursue the inquiry still further, the speaker wishes to persuade the hearer to a certain belief presumably because he recognizes some advantage to himself in doing so. We should conclude, therefore, from examination of the definition before us, that discourse is for the sake of the speaker.

Nor is this conclusion threatened by further investigation into the pre-Platonic philosophy of discourse. It is true that the practical precepts of the sophistic rhetoricians pay great deference to the hearer, even seeming, at first glance, to exalt him over the speaker. Every detail of the speech is to be sedulously "adapted" to the hearer. Nothing is to be done without reference to him. His tastes are to be studied, his prejudices regarded, his little jealousies and chagrins written down in a book;—but all this, be it remembered, in order simply that he may the more completely be subjugated to the speaker's will. As the definition has previously suggested, the hearer's ultimate importance to discourse is of the slightest. To his interests the process of discourse is quite indifferent.

But not only does persuasion, according to the sophistic notion, fail to consider the interests of the hearer; frequently it even assails them. In fact, the sophistic precepts bristle with implications that the hearer's part in dis-

1. The use of the term "social" in connection with rhetorical theory has been borrowed directly from Prof. F. N. Scott of the University of Michigan; though for the interpretation here put upon the word, he is not necessarily responsible.

course is virtually to be spoiled. The hearer is to be persuaded for the sake of some advantage to the speaker. If his own advantage should chance to lie in the same direction with that of the speaker, the utmost that the process of discourse could do would be merely to point out this fact to the hearer. In such a case little persuasive art is demanded. It is rather when the interests of the hearer, if rightly understood by him, oppose his acceptance of the conclusion urged by the speaker that real rhetorical skill comes into play. Then is the speaker confronted by a task worthy of his training—that of making the acceptance of this conclusion, which is really inimical to the hearer's interests, seem to him advantageous. In plainest statement, the speaker must by finesse assail the hearer's interests for the sake of his own.

This is a typical case of discourse, according to the sophistic conception. Its essentially anti-social character appears both in its conscious purpose and in its unrecognized issues. We have seen that the end it seeks is exclusively individual, sanctioned only by that primitive ethical principle of the dominance of the strong. The speaker through discourse secures his own advantage simply because he is able to do so. The meaning of his action to the hearer or to society as a whole, is purely a moral question with which rhetoric is not directly concerned. There is, in the rhetorical theory of the sophists, no test for the process of discourse larger than the success of the speaker in attaining his own end.

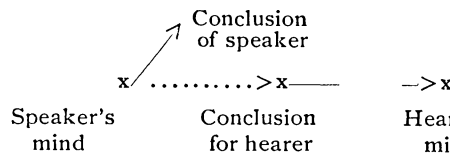
But further, the sophistic conception of discourse is anti-social in its outcome. Instead of levelling conditions between the two parties to the act, as we are told is the tendency in all true social functioning, discourse renders these conditions more unequal than they were before it took place. The speaker, superior at the outset, by virtue at least of a keener perception of the situation, through the process of discourse, comes still further to dominate the hearer. As in primitive warfare the stronger of two tribal organizations subdues and eventually enslaves the weaker, so in discourse the initial advantage of the speaker returns to him with usury.

This anti-social character of the sophistic discourse, as seen both in its purpose and in its outcome, may be finally traced to the fact that the process, as we have analyzed it, just fails of achieving complete communication between speaker and hearer. Some conclusion is, indeed, established in the mind of the hearer, but not necessarily the conclusion which the speaker himself has reached upon this subject. It may, in fact, oppose all his own experience and thought, and thus hold no organic relation to his own mind. But wishing the hearer to believe it, he picks it up somewhere and proceeds to insert it into the hearer's mind.

This absence of a vital relationship between the normal activities of the speaker's mind and the action by which he seeks to persuade the hearer, breaks the line of communication between the two persons concerned. Conditions at the ends of the circuit cannot be equalized, as in true social functioning, because the current is thus interrupted.

This conception of the process of discourse might be graphically represented in figure:

Figure 1.



The sophistic account of discourse, then, makes it a process essentially individualistic, and thus socially irresponsible. It secures the advantage of the speaker without regard to that of the hearer, or even in direct opposition to it. Because this conception leaves a gap in the chain of communication between the minds of speaker and hearer, it fails to equalize conditions between them. The speaker wins and the hearer loses continually. Discourse is purely predatory,—a primitive aggression of the strong upon the weak. The art of rhetoric is the art of war.

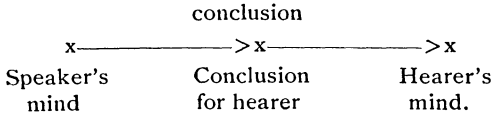
Against this essentially crude and anti-social conception of discourse, Plato seems to have raised the first articulate protest. Discourse is not an isolated phenomenon, he maintained, cut off from all relations to the world in which it occurs, and exempt from the universal laws of justice and right. The speaker has certain

obligations, not perhaps directly to the hearer, but to the absolute truth of which he is but the mouthpiece, to the entire order of things which nowadays we are wont to call society. Discourse is, indeed, persuasion, but not persuasion to any belief the speaker pleases. Rather is it persuasion to the truth, knowledge of which, on the part of the hearer, ultimately advantages both himself and the speaker as well. The interests of both are equally furthered by legitimate discourse. In fact the interests of both are, when rightly understood, identical; hence there can be no antagonism between them.

In respect, then, to the advantage gained by each party to the act of discourse, speaker and hearer stand on a footing of at least approximate equality. In fact the ultimate end of discourse must be, from the Platonic premises, to establish equality between them. Before discourse takes place the speaker has a certain advantage over the hearer. He perceives a truth as yet hidden from the hearer, but necessary for him to know. Since the recognition of this truth on the part of the hearer must ultimately serve the speaker's interests as well, the speaker, through the act of discourse, communicates to the hearer his own vision. This done, the original inequality is removed, the interests of both speaker and hearer are furthered, and equilibrium is at this point restored to the social organism.

It is plain that the circuit of communication between speaker and hearer is in Plato's conception of discourse continuous. The speaker having himself come to a certain conclusion, does not set about establishing another in the hearer's mind, but simply transmits his own belief into the other's consciousness. The connection between the two minds is living and unbroken. The Platonic notion of the process of discourse may be thus illustrated as in figure:

Figure 2.



Thus have been hastily reviewed the two opposing conceptions of discourse delivered to us by the earliest rhetoricians. The changes which they have suffered in the lapse of centuries are surprisingly slight. We find implicit in many of our modern text-books practically the same conception of discourse which was held by the pre-Platonic teachers of rhetoric,—a conception which regards discourse as an act performed by the speaker upon the hearer for the advantage of the speaker alone. It is true that the present-day sophists include in the end of discourse not persuasion alone, but the production of any desired effect upon the hearer. This fact does not, however, modify fundamentally the nature of the process itself. The hearer (or reader as he has now become) is to be interested or amused, or reduced to tears, or overborne with a sense of the sublime, not indeed because the writer himself has previously been interested or amused and, in obedience to the primal social instinct, would communicate his experience to another, but because,—well, because the writer wishes to produce this effect upon the reader. Thus wishing, and being able to gratify his desire, the act of discourse results,—an act still individualistic and one-sided, serving no ends but those of the speaker himself. The effect to be produced upon the hearer, being wholly external to the experience of the speaker, leaves unjoined the old break between speaker and hearer in the process of communication. We have again, in but slightly altered guise, the sophistic conception of discourse.

But in spite of the persistence of this outworn conception in even some recent text-books, there are not wanting many evidences that the Platonic theory of discourse is at last coming home to the modern consciousness. It is doubtless true that the later social theory of rhetoric would not venture to define the end of discourse as that of declaring to another the absolute and universal truth. There may be two reasons for this. In the first place we are not now-a-days on such joyfully intimate terms with the absolute truth as was Plato. And, again, the practical value of even a little relative and perhaps temporary truth has become clearer to us—such truth as touches us through our personal experiences and observations. Yet it must be remembered that

Plato himself allowed the subject-matter of discourse to be the speaker's own vision of the absolute truth, thus individualizing the abstraction until we cannot regard it as fundamentally alien from our modern conception of experience, in the largest sense of the word.

Granting this substantial identity, then, we have only to prove that Plato's idea of personal experience as the subject-matter of discourse is a real factor in modern rhetorical theory. For this no long argument is required. We find this idea theoretically expressed in rhetorical treatises even as far back as Quintilian, in the implied definition of discourse as self-expression, a conception recently popularized by such writers as Arnold and Pater. This notion of discourse, neglecting that part of the process of communication by which an experience is set up in the mind of the writer, emphasized exclusively that segment which developes the experience of the writer into articulate form. Being thus incomplete as was the sophistic theory of discourse, it served only to supplement that by bringing out into clear consciousness the Platonic truth that the subject-matter of discourse has a direct relation to the mental processes of the writer.

On the practical side this truth has appeared in the comparatively recent decay of formal instruction in rhetoric, and the correlative growth of composition work in our schools. This practical study of composition, in so far as it deserved its name, displaced the writing of biographical essays, largely drawn from encyclopediac sources, and of treatises on abstract subjects far removed from any natural interests of the student who wrote. Both these lines of effort proving relatively profitless, the experiment was tried of drawing the material for writing directly from the every-day experience, observation and thinking of the student, —an experiment whose results proved so successful that the practice has long been established in most of our schools. This is a piece of history so recent and so well-known that it need not be dwelt upon. Its import, however, is worth noting. It means the practical, though perhaps unconscious, acceptance of Plato's principle that the subject-matter of discourse bears a vital relation to the mind of the speaker. And by virtue of this, it means the complete closing of the circuit of communication between speaker and hearer.

So far, then, the rising modern rhetorical theory agrees with the doctrine of Plato. It may, perhaps, differ from him in making discourse a process somewhat less self-conscious than he seems to have conceived it, arising from the speaker's primitive social instinct for sympathy, or (to put it more technically) for closer relations with his environment, rather than from any explicit desire to communicate his own vision of the truth to another. But this modification affects neither the nature of the process itself nor its ultimate outcome. Both the Platonic and the modern theory of discourse make it not an individualistic and isolated process for the advantage of the speaker alone, but a real communication between speaker and hearer, to the equal advantage of both, and thus a real function of the social organism.

This conception of discourse is rich in implications which Plato never saw, and which no modern has yet formulated. To this formulation, however, our practical teaching of English with all its psychologic and sociological import, is daily bringing us nearer. It cannot be long before we shall recognize a modern theory of discourse as large in its outlines as Plato's and far better defined in its details; a theory which shall complete the social justification which rhetoric has so long been silently working out for itself.

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GERMAN LANGUAGE.

Materials for German Prose Composition. With notes and vocabulary. Vol. ii, Narrative and Descriptive. By MAX POLL, Ph.D. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1899. 12mo, pp. 133+168 (Vocab.).

German Composition, based on humorous stories. By CARLA WENCKEBACH. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1899. 12mo, 282 pp.

THE mastery of any language naturally involves the power to express one's thoughts in